

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FORUMS 2002

Hosted by the Governor's Office of Planning & Research

## Tuesday, January 29, 2002

1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Salinas Community Center  
940 N. Main Street  
Salinas, CA

## Saturday, February 9, 2002

1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Dunsmuir Community Center Building  
4841 Dunsmuir Avenue  
Dunsmuir, CA

## Tuesday, February 5, 2002

1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Ronald Reagan Building  
300 South Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA

## Tuesday, February 26, 2002

1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
San Francisco Civic Center Complex  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA

### **What is Environmental Justice?**

According to California law, environmental justice (EJ) is the "the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and policies."

### **Goals and Objectives of the Forums**

- Create a network of EJ contacts at the community and local, state, and federal government levels
- Evaluate recent efforts to increase meaningful public involvement in governmental processes
- Hold a public hearing on EJ Guidelines for local general plans

### **Public Hearing: General Plan Environmental Justice Guidelines – begins 4:00 p.m. at each Forum**

Assembly Bill 1553 (Keeley, Chapter 762, Statutes of 2001) requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to prepare guidelines for addressing environmental justice matters in city and county general plans. As part of each EJ Forum, OPR will hold a public hearing to receive input prior to the preparation of the draft guidelines. There is no need for you to R.S.V.P. if you are only coming to the public hearing portion of the day, but please R.S.V.P. below for planning purposes, if you will be attending the other segments of the Forum. See attachment for more information.

### **Discussion Panel**

There will be a panel at each Forum intended to engage everyone in a discussion regarding meaningful public involvement in governmental decision making. Panelists will include a range of experts on public participation who will provide their insights and evaluations of recent governmental agency public participation efforts.

### **Networking and Information Sharing**

Organizations and agencies are encouraged to set up an informational booth regarding their EJ related activities. These booths are intended to educate others about your agency or organization and its role relating to EJ. There will be designated times during the forums for participants to visit the booths. If you are interested in having a booth, please fill out the appropriate portion of this form and return it no later than 2 weeks before the date of the forum you wish to attend.

#### Please R.S.V.P. by returning the attached form to:

Governor's Office of Planning & Research; C/O: Environmental Justice  
Forum; P.O. Box 3044, Room 200; Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

#### Or fax to:

(916) 323-2675

#### Questions? Please contact:

(Please do not R.S.V.P. by phone)

Bonnie Chiu at (916) 323-9033 or Bonnie.Chiu@opr.ca.gov

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** (please check all that apply) San Francisco ☐ Salinas ☐ Los Angeles ☐ Dunsmuir ☐

**I am planning to attend panel/booths:** Yes ☐ No ☐ **Will your organization/agency need a booth?** Yes ☐ No ☐

**If you need special accommodations or translation, please contact Bonnie Chiu at (916) 323-9033 at least 10 working days prior to the Forum you wish to attend.**

# WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

## The Blueprint

The local general plan can be described as the city's or county's "blueprint" for future development. It represents the community's view of its future; a constitution made up of the goals and policies upon which the city council, board of supervisors, and planning commission will base their land use decisions. To illustrate its importance, all subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions (except in charter cities other than Los Angeles) must be consistent with the general plan. If inconsistent, they must not be approved.

## Is the general plan the same as zoning?

No. Although both designate how land may be developed, they do so in different ways. The general plan has long-term outlook, identifying the types of development that will be allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. Zoning regulates present development through specific standards such as lot size, building set-back, and a list of allowable uses. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the zoning ordinance, but also the broader policies set forth in the local general plan.

## What are the contents of the general plan?

State law requires that each city and county adopt a general plan containing the following seven mandatory components or "elements": land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open-space, noise, and safety (Government Code Sections 65300 et seq.). Additionally, each jurisdiction may adopt additional elements covering subjects of particular interest to that jurisdiction such as recreation, urban design or public facilities.

Here is a summary of the seven mandatory elements:

- The **land use element** designates the general location and intensity of housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other land uses.
- The **circulation element** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, transportation routes, terminals, and public utilities and facilities. It must be correlated with the land use element.
- The **housing element** is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. It sets forth local housing policies and programs to implement those policies.
- The **conservation element** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.
- The **open-space element** details plans and measures for pre-serving open-space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and the identification of agricultural land.
- The **noise element** identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for distributing new noise-sensitive land uses.
- The **safety element** establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.

### **How are General Plans Approved?**

Cities and counties must hold public hearings to adopt or amend their general plans. Advance notice of the place and time of the hearing must be published in the newspaper or posted in the vicinity of the site proposed for change. Prior to approval, hearings are held by an advisory body such as the planning commission. The general plan must be adopted by a resolution of the legislative body of each city or county.

### **Are Community and Specific Plans the same as a General Plan?**

“Community plans” and “specific plans” are not the same as general plans. Community plans and specific plans are often used by cities and counties to plan the future of a particular area at a finer level of detail than that provided by the general plan. A community plan is a portion of the local general plan focusing on the issues pertinent to a particular area or community within the city or county. A specific plan implements but is not technically a part of the general plan

### **What are the General Plan Guidelines?**

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is required by law to provide and periodically update guidelines for cities and counties to use in the preparation of their general plans. The guidelines are advisory and not mandatory.

### **Why are the Guidelines a Topic for the EJ Forum?**

Assembly Bill (AB) 1553 requires OPR to include, within the guidelines for the mandatory elements, guidelines for addressing environmental justice matters in the next edition of the general plan guidelines (but no later than July 1, 2003). Environmental justice is defined in California law as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

### **What Does OPR Hope To Get From Participants in the Forum?**

AB1553 requires OPR to hold at least one public hearing prior to the release of any draft guidelines, and at least one public hearing after the release of the draft guidelines. OPR hopes that the input from participants in the forum will help OPR to provide better guidance to local governments to do the following.

- (1) Plan for the equitable distribution of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance community quality of life throughout the community, given the fiscal and legal constraints that restrict the siting of these facilities;
- (2) Provide for the location, if any, of industrial facilities and uses that, even with the best available technology, will contain or produce material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant hazard to human health and safety, in a manner that seeks to avoid over-concentrating these uses in proximity to schools or residential dwellings;
- (3) Provide for the location of new schools and residential dwellings in a manner that seeks to avoid locating these uses in proximity to industrial facilities and uses that will contain or produce material that because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant hazard to human health and safety; and,
- (4) Propose methods for promoting more livable communities by expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development so that residents minimize traffic and pollution impacts from traveling for purposes of work, shopping, schools, and recreation.